

TOWN OF WILTON  
**SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
 WILTON TOWN HALL COURTROOM

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DATE: Monday, November 1, 2021  
 TIME: 6:00 PM  
 PRESENT: Chairwoman Kellie-Sue Boissonnault, Selectman Kermit R. Williams, Selectman Matthew S. Fish,  
 Town Administrator Paul Branscombe, Deputy Town Administrator Janice Pack

Chairwoman Boissonnault opened the Meeting and a roll call was taken. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairwoman Boissonnault introduced Nick Germain, the Town of Wilton's new Town Administrator, who started today.

**Introduction of new Police Department Administrative Assistant** – Lt. John Frechette introduced Lori Rautiola, who also started today.

**Swearing in of new Police Department Hires** – Lt. Frechette presented David Pardue who is a Certified Officer, and Nina Rak, Michael Ellis and Brandhan "Conner" Harris who are all Academy bound. Chairwoman Boissonnault read the Oath of Office which the officer and officer candidates repeated. Pictures were taken, and the new Police Department employees welcomed to Wilton.

**Chris Carter – ARPA Funds** – Chris Carter joined the table on behalf of the Wilton Sewer Department. He is hoping that the Select Board will reconsider funding any of the other projects they had brought before them earlier. However, their control panel at the Intervale pump station has failed. The pump company was able to get it running, but it's a temporary fix. They've already faced several complications with the system before. Mill Street Pump Station has the same board, and they did get pricing on a new controller board but there would need to be upgrades made. It was recommended that they replace both boards at a cost of \$27,400 per station. Mr. Carter said he would push this to the top of the list. He is asking for additional ARPA money to replace both boards now. Chairwoman Boissonnault said she would like to check to be certain that this would qualify; Mr. Carter said he understood that, but we don't have much time. Chairwoman Boissonnault directed Mr. Germain to check into that.

**Joining NH Public Works Mutual Aid System – Dave Boissonnault** – Mr. Boissonnault, our Emergency Management Director, came to the table to inform the Select Board about the NH Public Works Mutual Aid System. As it is his duty to mitigate problems ahead of time, he feels this is inexpensive insurance for the Town. At an annual cost of only \$25, without obligation to reciprocate, this plan is an easy way for our Town to be able to take advantage of mutual aid from other towns. We have mutual aid for our fire and ambulance services; our Public Works Department employees are First Responders, too, when needed to get the streets cleared. Selectman Williams asked if there were a list of things that the mutual aid could be used for; Mr. Boissonnault detailed a few examples. **Selectman Fish moved to enter into the Public Works Mutual Aid Program for the fiscal year 2022, Selectman Williams seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.**

**Fire Department Locker Room Entrance** – Chief Don Nourse joined the table to speak about the 2 quotes he received for work proposed. He is asking to use money from some of his other budget lines to mitigate the issue they've been challenged with in the locker room where the officers get dressed. This area opens into the apparatus bay, and this door would seal that off so that in the summer it would control the temperature and humidity. This is a first step. Selectman Williams asked if this was a design flaw, and Chief Nourse said it certainly was. Chief Nourse felt there was room in his Stipend line to cover this. He is supporting the lower quote from Portland Glass which includes sealing off the pass-through as well, which the other quotes did not. **Selectman Williams moved that Chief Nourse accept the bid from**



**Portland Glass, and ask the Finance Officer to initiate the fund transfer from Stipends to Building Repair and Maintenance. Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.**

**Salary Comparisons** – Jane Farrell spoke briefly on the wage study she was asked to compile, saying that Wilton has not done this since 2015. She has compiled a salary comparison from NHMA and many surrounding communities. The scope of the study covers many departments including highway, town clerk/tax collector and she tried to come up with creative comparisons for Ambulance, Fire and Recycling. She distributed several worksheets, and commented favorably on the one from Lyndeborough. She noted that many communities are working on this same project right now and trying to find ways to retain employees.

Chairwoman Boissonnault asked Ms. Farrell to make up packets for the Work Session coming up, and thanked her for her hard work on this project. Selectman Williams asked for the data to be sent electronically, too.

Sergeant Olivia Siekman came to the table next; she along with Lt. Frechette has done the salary comparison for the Police Department. She has looked at New Ipswich and Jaffrey for comparison and felt she had come across a happy medium pay-scale wise. The Jaffrey system seemed to be the most workable, although she noted that their wages were not in Wilton's reach. She said that if the Police Department received a 2.5% increase on an annual basis, the wage scale would work. She has also met with Dawn Tuomala who agreed that it fell into the happy medium for our town. She will send copies to the Board, the Deputy Town Administrator and the Town Administrator.

**Cost of Living Increase & Merit Pool Fund** – Mr. Branscombe said this time last year we spoke about these same topics. He did his own research with Jane, particularly on the Ambulance Department. There isn't really anyone like our Ambulance Director who has her credentials. Research on COLAs show that most towns are going with the Social Security numbers rather than the CPI. Typically, the Ambulance per diem employees only get increases when they move from one step to another; we should include them in the COLAs. Selectman Williams said we should consider the COLA and Merit Pool in conjunction with the Salary Increases. Selectman Williams thought it would be helpful to get a broader idea of what people in other towns are using for COLAs and Merit Increases. Mr. Branscombe will work with Mr. Germain to put that out on the Municipal Managers List Serve.

**Signing of the MS-1 – Selectman Williams moved to approve the 2021 MS-1 as presented, Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.** The MS-1 was signed.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Chief Olesen said the new cruiser is here but it is lacking the computer. For a patrol PC designed to work in the cruiser it will run about \$5,000. He does have the money in his Vehicle Maintenance line if it cannot be covered elsewhere. Selectman Williams suggested that he go ahead and use the money in his Vehicle Maintenance line for now.

Ms. Pack read the comment emailed in from Gail Proctor regarding Wilton becoming an SB2 Town; she was not in favor of that.

Jeff Maher wanted to raise a concern regarding the Assessment and Abatement process. He is not happy with the way his assessment went up; he did his research and came into the meeting with Todd Haywood armed with that information. He felt that his argument was factual and informative, and then found out that his assessment increased again. He is just looking for information on why this happened, and what Mr. Haywood's thought process was.

Selectman Fish commented on the same subject. He said he met with Mr. Haywood as well, and went over the comparable sales, too, and had to accept the increase.

Chairwoman Boissonnault said it bothers her that Mr. Maher is not getting the answers to the questions he has. She said if this Board wants to, they can have Mr. Haywood come before the Board to discuss this.

DJ Garcia said he's new to the Budget Committee this year. He thinks its going to be difficult for the Budget Committee to come up with final budgets because they're waiting for the salary numbers. He hopes the Board can start the process sooner next time. Selectman Williams said that was one reason we asked for a committee to look into salaries.



Chairwoman Boissonnault said her opinion is that you go through all of the other lines and leave the labor line for last. Her pet peeve is that people come before the Budget Committee and present what they want to have and the Budget Committee just nod their heads; this makes it harder to make cuts.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Acceptance of ARPA Funds (full amount) – Selectman Williams moved we accept the full amount of \$396,670; Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.**

**Highway Block Grant – The Town has received the Highway Block Grant Aid payment in the amount of \$37,228.92. Selectman Williams moved that the Town accept the kind donation from the State of NH in the amount of \$37,228.92, Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.**

Chairwoman Boissonnault gave a shout out to Randy Kohler of Witches Spring for the way he stepped up and did the Kreeps for Main Street. It was a very festive Halloween and certainly added to the good energy around town.

#### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES**

- Mr. Branscombe said this has been Mr. Germain's first day and it's a good thing he's a fast reader. He thanked Chief Olesen for taking him on a tour of the Town. Tomorrow he will tour the Ambulance Bay and Fire Station with Chief Nourse and Director Miller.
- He's left Mr. Branscombe a narrative of the files on this desk including Old County Farm Road and King Brook Road Bridge.
- Josif Bijca met Mr. Germain at the Stagecoach Road Bridge opening and will be coming in to speak further with him shortly. Selectman Williams asked if we had an update on the construction costs; Mr. Branscombe said it was 1.4 million.
- Mr. Branscombe said it is important that Mr. Germain talk to Bonnie Batchelder and look at the Internal Controls. We still need to finalize the Procedure; the Policy is in place. Mr. Garcia will work on that with Mr. Germain.
- Mr. Branscombe shared the photos taken by Bart Hunter at the Bridge Opening ceremony. Ms. Pack suggested that they be used for the Town Report.
- Mr. Branscombe shared a check in the amount of \$8,818.14 that Carol Burgess received from Westford Metals for the sale of Precious Metals from the Recycling Center.
- Director Miller presented a list of clients to be sent to Collections. These are balances that were either self-pay or balances to be paid. **Chairwoman Boissonnault moved that we send \$6,586.05 to the Collection Agency, Selectman Fish seconded. All were in favor; motion passed.** Chairwoman Boissonnault noted that Dennis Allen from EMAX will be at the meeting of November 15<sup>th</sup>. Selectman Williams said looking at the most recent financial statements for the end of September it is still listing numbers based on billing; Director Miller said she is listing what has actually been received.
- Mr. Branscombe thanked our EMD for notifying us about the sediment going into Frog Pong. He sent an email to the Town of Milford who said they would get on it right away. Brian Adams had told Bart Hunter that Tannery Brook was discolored and they acted right away to try and find out why.
- Chief Olesen said that Continental Paving was down there today so they're probably trying to mediate that. Selectman Fish said what you're seeing is a disconnect between Mother Nature and sediment control. What is being required is not adequate for what has been going on lately weather-wise; Continental Paving does not cut corners.
- Ladder One goes in for annual service tomorrow.
- We will host a Meet & Greet for Mr. Germain in the Courtroom on Thursday from 2:00 – 3:00.
- Dawson Gay's Health Officer Report states that Wilton reports a total of 347 COVID cases since the pandemic began; and currently has 15 active cases. He is concerned and wants to know how the Select Board wants to respond. Do we want to have less people at our meetings? Mask up? Wait and see? Chairwoman Boissonnault is not in favor of a mask mandate. She does encourage people to get their vaccines, and their boosters. Selectman Fish said the Planning Board does require masks at their meetings. Selectman Williams said masks are really protection for other people. The Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office is still the place where the most people come in on a regular basis. He's curious as to how the Town Clerk feels. EMD Boissonnault said it's an individual's choice, but you could put "Masks are Strongly Recommended" signs up. Ms. Farrell said she thinks masks are a



good idea. We cannot enforce it, but she does think it should be encouraged. She said it is scary; the numbers are going up.

## SELECT BOARD ITEMS

Selectman Fish said he was at the reservoir and it looks great. The Conservation Commission did have the County Forester come out and look at the red pine diseased trees. He wants to talk about the letter to the landowner who was putting up signs on property that was not hers. Selectman Fish said a letter needs to be sent to let her know that would jeopardize the status of the property. Mr. Branscombe will speak to Michele Decoteau about that. Regarding the trees on Heald Road which is a scenic road, there are trees that do need to be pruned back; he is going down to look at that further. Regarding the County Farm Road Bridge, he encouraged all to look at the Grove Street Bridge in Peterborough; a historic bridge currently undergoing a rebuild. Lastly, he felt Halloween was a huge success last night and he thanked all who participated.

Chairwoman Boissonnault said if they need to take trees down at the Reservoir, they should be taken down into the parking lot area. Selectman Fish is not in favor of cutting them. He thinks they will take care of themselves. We need to have that clarified; Selectman Fish said the trees are NOT yet diseased. Chairwoman Boissonnault and Selectman Williams said they were under the impression that the trees were already diseased. Chairwoman Boissonnault asked Mr. Germain to get an update on that.

Selectman Williams said the last time we met we talked about the Community Power Aggregation. The first step is to put a committee together - the Community Power Committee. He'd like to ask this Board to vote tonight to appoint a Community Power Committee. He thinks Mr. Germain should take the leadership piece of that. The law said it shouldn't just be members of the Energy Committee; he will volunteer to be part of the Committee. If we're going to put this on the March warrant, we need to get started. Chairwoman Boissonnault asked for clarification. Selectman Williams said 70% of people under Eversource have default power which means that they don't bother to look for the best supplier, they just take whatever Eversource gives them. The Eversource rate is just under 9 cents/kilowatt. He feels we will see significant increases and its time to think about doing something different. Chairwoman Boissonnault would like the Committee to remember that if a person is receiving assistance for their utilities, that typically is not accepted by any other provider but Eversource. **Selectman Williams moved that we create a Community Power Aggregation Committee and move forward with the potential of putting this on the warrant next year. Selectman Fish seconded.** Chairwoman Boissonnault clarified that she wanted to encourage the residents to participate; this should be posted for them to join. **All were in favor; motion passed.**

Selectman Williams wants to acquire a copy of ARC GIS. At Town Meeting we voted to accept 2 grants, one for Stormwater and one for Sewer. A portion of the funds was to be used for equipment. A copy of ARC GIS is about \$1,500. We need to involve Michele Decoteau in this as it would be his recommendation that she be the keeper of that license. **Selectman Williams moved that the Town use a portion of the grant funds as designated in the funds themselves to purchase an ARC GIS program and maintenance.** He said we may need another computer for this. Chris Carter said that we're looking at a holder of the license and he agreed that Ms. Decoteau would be the person to do that. We also need field holder licenses, perhaps Brian Adams? Selectman Williams said they could talk about that further. We will see what Ms. Decoteau has left in her budget. Selectman Williams asked Mr. Germain to look into that. **Selectman Williams withdrew his motion.**

Selectman Williams said regarding the CIP Committee, they are trying to finalize the numbers so it can go to the Planning Board. He asked about the Reval number; it should be \$45,500. The clockface should be pushed out to 2024. Regarding the Dam Repairs, he said New Reservoir is listed at \$200,000 which seems high to him. He wonders if we should continue to put money into the Capital Reserve Fund for that. It was thought to amend the fund to include all dams at the next Town Meeting. He is concerned about the items on the list for Ambulance and Recycling; he feels we won't have the level of funding in those revolving funds unless we start increasing the support from the other towns. He feels there are significant potential investments on the Ambulance's CIP, too, including a new ambulance for 2024. Selectman Williams asked Mr. Germain to attend the next CIP meeting on November 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM.

Selectman Williams wanted to ask Jeanette Vinton how our new auditors believe that we could carry Capital Reserve Funds on the books. This question is really about the Water Department's books. Plodzik & Sanderson had said the Water Department should not carry them on their books because they should be carried by the Trustees of the Trust Funds. For Ambulance, he wants to start getting numbers that were actual collections rather than billing numbers. The revenues for the Operating reports don't include tax collections which we already know what we're going to get. The expenditure piece doesn't include the money we give to the schools and the county, which also makes the numbers screwy.

Selectman Williams asked about demolition protocol. There is a fence around the TDS building at the end of the street. The building is more than 100 years old and this Board voted 2-3 years ago to have a demolition policy and ask the Heritage Commission to weigh in and capture the essence of the building. He wants the Town Administrator to have our Building Inspector put this on the Demolition Permit so that people will recognize that when a building is 100 years old or older that they need to check with the Heritage Commission. Selectman Williams said Michael D'ell Orto has spoken to them and they are giving him pictures.

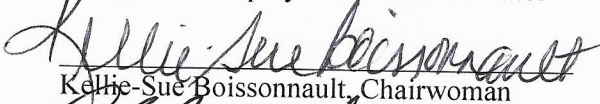
Chairwoman Boissonnault said we have a work session on November 8, 2021 beginning at 5:30 PM. She noted that most of this will be in Non-Public Session.

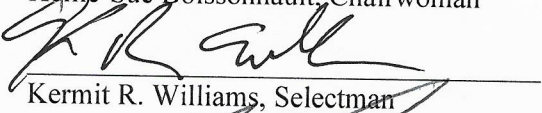
The Board signed the Accounts Payables Manifests and Transfers, and the Minutes of the previous meeting. The Select Board reviewed 2 Community Action Reports from the NH Department of Revenue, and a Legal/Public Notice from the Town of Hillsborough ZBA. The Board approved a copy of the Hillsborough County payment of \$463,291 which is due on or before December 17, 2021. The Board signed the PA-16 for Russell-Abbott State Forest.

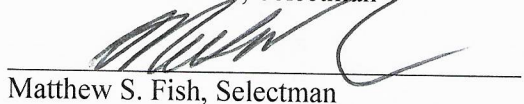
**Selectman Fish Moved to adjourn; Selectman Williams seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted:

Janice Pack, Deputy Town Administrator

  
Kellie-Sue Boissonnault, Chairwoman

  
Kermit R. Williams, Selectman

  
Matthew S. Fish, Selectman